

By Rep. Steve King

Much has been said about Barack Obama receiving the “youth vote” in the 2008 election. Pundits claimed that Obama’s popularity with younger Americans was proof that conservatism is on the way out as a new generation of liberals reaches voting age.

What is statistically interesting about today’s youth is that in the most important area they are more conservative than their parents. Today’s young men and women are more pro-life than past generations. According to a 2008 Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life poll, only 52% of Americans under 30 support legalized abortion compared to 58% of Americans aged 50-64.

A 2006 Hamilton College poll of randomly selected American high school seniors found that 72% of female students said they would not consider having an abortion, 69% of males students said they would not encourage their partner to have an abortion and 80% (male and female) said someone else who gets pregnant should either give the baby up for adoption or raise it themselves. Only 13% suggested abortion for someone else. A 2007 poll of 17-29 year old Americans conducted by the New York Times, CBS News and MTV found that only 37% of the respondents believe abortion should be “generally available to those who want it.”

Today’s youth have seen first-hand the effects of the so-called “free love” movement of the 1960s. What was supposed to deliver liberation and empowerment for women across the country has instead resulted in the exploitation and mistreatment of many women. Today many men view women as sexual objects and sex as recreation. As a result, women are often pressured into abortion.

The mental health consequences of abortion are often severe. During the Supreme Court hearings for the case *Gonzales v. Carhart*, over 180 post-abortive women submitted affidavits to the Court testifying that they suffered adverse emotional and psychological effects from abortion.

In 2006, a pro-choice researcher in New Zealand released a study with ground-breaking findings. The study showed that of 15 to 18 year old girls who have abortions, 78.6 % display symptoms of major depression, while only 31.2 % of girls who have not had abortions experience such symptoms.

In addition, the study found that 27 % of 21 to 25 year old women who have abortions have suicidal thoughts, while only 8 % of women who have not had abortions suffer from suicidal thoughts. The ugly truth is that abortion hurts women, and today's youth are coming to realize that there are very real consequences to abortion.

The original feminists knew about the dangers of a society that did not value life, and the early feminist movement sought to establish the value of all human life. Legendary feminist Mary Wollstonecraft chastised those who would "destroy the embryo in the womb." While discussing abortion, activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton stated, "When you consider that women have been treated as property, it is degrading to women that we should treat our children as property to be disposed of as we see fit."

These early suffragists fought for equality for all people. They defended the rights of the unborn, alongside the rights of women. Like these early pro-life activists, more and more of today's youth understand that "they are endowed by our Creator," with unalienable rights to "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness," first guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence. Life is the most fundamental right of every human being, and abortion violates this most basic principle.

Modern science has negated the abortion lobby's false claims that an unborn child is simply a "clump of cells." New technological advancements continue to affirm that an unborn child is a living, breathing, growing being. Scientists have discovered that at just 21 days after fertilization, a baby's heart begins beating, and the first signs of brain development are evident. At seven weeks, a baby's heart can be heard on an ultrasound.

A few months ago a twenty-nine year old Planned Parenthood director quit her job after watching an abortion on an ultrasound. With the development of technology like the four-dimensional sonogram, it has become increasingly difficult for today's young people to deny the humanity of an unborn child. Seventy percent of women considering an abortion who have a 4-D ultrasound will decide to have the baby.

The gift of human life, the most helpless and innocent of which is the unborn, is the most precious. Former Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey spoke of the

value of life this way: “Human life cannot be measured. It is the measure itself against which all things are weighed.”

Today, as we mark the anniversary of the most devastating decision in U.S. Supreme Court history, we can also give thanks that a new, pro-life generation is stepping into the shoes of the secular humanists who gave us abortion on demand.